stance, the mind lapses into a hopelessly perverted state, calling good evil, and evil good. A deep but somewhat gloomy thinker, John Foster, says, " It were probably absurd to expect that any mind should itself be able to detect all its own obliquities, after having been so long beguiled, like the mariners in a story which I have read, who followed the direction of their compass, infallibly right, as they could have no doubt, till they arrived at an enemy's port, where they were seized and made slaves. It happened that the wicked captain, in order to betray the ship, had concealed a large loadstone at a little distance on one side of the needle/'* The illustration is most apposite of the constant power of a sinful will, like this concealed loadstone, to draw aside the conscience from its proper bearing, and to lead the possessor astray while he thinks he is holding on in the right direction.

We can thus account for the extraordinary perversions of moral feeling by which certain religious sects are characterized. The delusion caused in individuals by their personal idiosyncrasy, or the influence of accidental circumstances, is produced in these sects by a skilfully arranged system, the prime movers in which deceive others by the same means by which they were themselves deceived. In all such cases it may be remarked, that there are two necessary means employed—there is an acknowledged virtue placed on the foreground before the mind, and there is a course of training. By this virtue the moral faculty is gained; and by the training, the mind is taught to look at this virtue, and to the advantages flowing from its exercise, while other and offensive aspects are studiously kept out of view. Thus, in the Society of Jesus there are placed before the mind the duty of serving Christ, the virtue of submission to a superior, and the advantages thence accruing of centralization, and the energy of united action; and then there is a system of discipline, with a studious

secrecy, and disclosures according as the parties are able to bear them. In Thuggery, it was proclaimed that the sacrifice of human life is sacred to the Goddess of Destruction, and that the strangled go to Paradise, and none were allowed to witness the horrid rites till the third year of their apprenticeship.

These are the workings of the conscience, in regard to its more direct office of pointing out the path of duty. In its more re-

* Foster on a Man's Writing Memoirs of Himself.